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ABSTRACT

With the assumption that the teacher of students with identifiable ethnic or cultural background must be prepared to deal with each student's heritage in a meaningful way, the document provides resource materials for Connecticut classroom teachers and/or music specialists with responsibilities for teaching children of Puerto Rican heritage. The materials enable the sensitive teacher to use the opportunities for cultural and musical understanding provided by Puerto Rican holidays and festivals to enrich classroom work, and to work from the interests of Hispanic students, developing self-concepts and familiarizing those of Hispanic origins with aspects of their own heritage which may not be known to them. The document supplies: a brief history of Puerto Rico and Puerto Rican music; descriptions and drawings of popular musical instruments (guiro, maracas, caracol, drum or maguey, cuatro, tiple, bordonua, tres, guitar, bomba drums, congas, clave, pandereta, timbales, bongo drums, cencerro, and tambora); biographical sketches of 14 Puerto Rican composers; description and step diagrams of dances (La Danza, La Bomba, La Plena, and El Seis); examples of musical forms (Decima and Aguinaldos); and selected Puerto Rican music. (NRC)

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The Music of Puerto Rico

A CLASSROOM MUSIC HANDBOOK

1981

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Introduction

Music of Puerto Rico is offered as a resource book for those classroom teachers or music specialist with responsibilities for teaching children of Puerto Rican heritage.

If effective teaching is to concern itself with the individual needs and nature of the learner, then the teacher of students with identifiable ethnic or cultural background must be prepared to deal with each student's heritage in a meaningful way.

The intent here is to provide materials for the neophyte in Puerto Rican music, supplying a brief introduction to the history of Puerto Rican music, acquaintance with composers, forms, and instruments, as well as information about Puerto Rican culture, songs, dances, and festivals.

It is hoped that these materials will enable the sensitive teacher to use the opportunities for cultural and musical understanding provided by Puerto Rican holidays and festivals for the enrichment of classroom work.

The teacher can work from the interests of Hispanic students, developing self-concepts and familiarizing those of Hispanic origins with aspects of their own heritage which may not be known to them.

Since inservice or preservice programs seldom include any real skills or information about Puerto Rican culture or music, the need for information about the music of Puerto Rico would appear to be critical for many teachers.

Need

For several years the number of minority and non-English dominant families residing in Connecticut has shown substantial increase. According to the fall 1978 school census of minority pupils, there were 30,466 Hispanic students, an increase of 5,470 students over 1977. Of the student population with a home language other than English, the Hispanic students proved to be the largest group in 1978 comprising 24,077 students.

As of September 1979 state required bilingual programs were developed in many schools including Hispanic programs in 107 schools.

More than 80 percent of identified migrant students in Connecticut in 1980 are reported to be Hispanic.

This publication has been produced by the Cultural Awareness Component of the Connecticut Migratory Childrens Program which is coordinated by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

1. A Brief History of Puerto Rico

(Information from the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture)

Puerto Rico, easternmost island of the Greater Antilles, was inhabited by Taíno Indians of the Arawak culture when Columbus discovered it November 19, 1493. Ponce de Leon, first governor of Puerto Rico, established the first colony, Caparra, in 1508. San Juan, the capital, was founded in 1521 and in its first 117 years was attacked by Carib Indians, English and Dutch fleets and again by the English in 1797.

Soon after its colonization in 1508 the gold that had attracted the Spaniards began to fail and settlers turned to growing sugar cane and coffee which became highly prized in Europe. These main crops were basis of the economy until the present century when coffee cultivation dwindled. After World War II an intensive industrialization program was undertaken and is still continuing.

After the Spanish-American War in 1898 Spain ceded the island to the United States and in 1917 Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens. Their governors were Presidential appointees until in 1948 when they elected their own Governor for the first time. In July 25, 1952, Puerto Rico became a commonwealth voluntarily associated with the United States through a contract approved by Puerto Ricans at the polls and by the U.S. Congress.

Puerto Rico, an island lying between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, is 100 miles long by 35 miles wide. It is 1,042 miles southeast of Miami, 1,652 miles southeast of New York, 550 miles north of Venezuela. Bordered by a coastal plain, the interior is mountainous, its highest point being Cerro de Punta which rises 4,348 feet above sea level.

The climate is tropical marine. The surrounding ocean modifies surface temperature to a seasonal variation of about six degrees from the coldest months in January and February to the warmest in August and September for an average of 77 degrees. The mean maximum temperature for San Juan is 85 degrees and the mean minimum 70.9 degrees.

Average annual rainfall in the north coastal sections is about 60 inches compared to about 85 inches in higher interior regions. In the Luquillo Mountains rain forest -- El Yunque -- annual rainfall averages 180 inches. A few miles away on the south coast it averages about 40 inches.

Since Puerto Rico is part of the United States, U.S. money, mail and measures are used except that highways are marked in kilometers. Spanish is the official language but English is widely spoken. The population of the island is about 2.7 million, 775 persons per square mile. The death rate is 6.5 per 1,000 population as compared with 9.4 per 1,000 in continental United States. Life expectancy is 70.2 years as compared with 70.5 years in continental United States.

Eight years ago, San Juan, Capital of Puerto Rico, celebrated the 450th Anniversary of its founding in 1521. That was 28 years after Columbus on his second voyage discovered the island called Boriquen by the Indians and years after Juan Ponce de León arrived with 50 Spaniards in 1508 to colonize the city. San Juan is 44 years older than St. Augustine, which celebrated its 400th anniversary in 1965, so this Puerto Rican city is the oldest under the American flag. It is also the second-oldest in the western hemisphere, preceded only by Santo Domingo City.

After exploring the coasts and nearby territory, Juan Ponce de León located the first settlement a league south of San Juan bay and named it Caparra. There he built a stronghouse to defend the colony against Indian attack and at the same time to serve as the home of his family. (The foundation and a small museum can be seen on Rte. 2 Km. 6.4.) In 1509 King Ferdinand the Catholic appointed Ponce first Governor of Puerto Rico.

The other settlers complained that Caparra was unhealthful and too far from the harbor which could only be reached by a road described as "infernal." In 1519 authorization was given over Ponce's opposition to move the settlement to the Isleta de San Juan, the long, narrow island that forms the north side of the bay. The move was completed two years later.

Through the 16th century San Juan was continually threatened by Carib Indians and sea rovers and its defenses were inadequate for several decades. But as the bitter rivalry of European powers became fiercer, Spain determined to make the city impregnable.

By the middle of the 19th century the entire Isleta de San Juan had been fortified from the harbor channel on the west to Fort San Jeronimo on the east coast. Forts, batteries, accessory building, dry moats and walls covered 266 acres, all designed to defend the walled city which itself covered only 62 acres.

In the present century the municipality of San Juan has grown apace, now covering 27,040 acres with a population of 455,421. Reference is sometimes made to the San Juan Metropolitan Area which includes San Juan, Bayamón, Carolina, Cataño, Guaynabo and Trujillo Alto.

Old San Juan is unique because of the great number of fine colonial houses that remain within the frame of the massive City Wall and two great forts. The old residences are built of a strong mixture of stone, brick lime and sand. They are simple but beautiful because of the proportions and details of arches, shuttered doorways, lovely woodwork and their characteristic long balconies, wide entrance halls, archways, interior patios, broad impressive stairways, and high ceilings supported by beams of ausubo (bulletwood).

Many of the streets are paved with adoquines, small grey-blue blocks cast from residue of iron furnaces in Spain and brought to Puerto Rico in the late 19th century.

San Juan today is a city in transition with freshly restored buildings contrasting with others that are still dilapitated or boarded up for the work of restoration by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture as well as private persons or groups.

11. The Music of Puerto Rico

The Taíno Indians of the Caribbean island, they called Boriquen, were a peaceful people whose culture emphasized dance and music in celebrations of the major events in their lives: marriage, birth, harvest, death, storms, etc.

The "Areyto" was the most significant of these celebrations by the Tainos in their villages or "yucayeques." The celebration of the Areyto was characterized by a combination of dance, rituals, chants, accompanied by instruments such as the güiro (gourd) and maracas (shakers) which continue in use today. Although music and games were important to the Taino culture, little is known about the actual nature of the music due to the lack of written language or music notation.

The "Areytos" were religious ceremonies celebrated on the Bateyes.* The Tainos danced, sang, told tales about the history of the gods, the Indian chiefs ("caciques") and the people as part of the ceremony.

The first colonists brought many forms of sacred as well as secular musical expression from Spain which were modified in the new tropical environment. In the course of the years some of these forms acquired new characteristics. The songs of Puerto Rico are variations of the Andalucian Copla or Castillian Romance (historical ballads), carols, and songs, of Spanish origin. Puerto Rican children, urban or rural, still sing the old Spanish romances in their games.

Traditional Spanish music was carried into the hinterlands by the colonists and has survived more tenaciously in the mountains of the interior than along the coast where foreign influences were more pervasive.

Of the Indian "Areyto" all that survives is the rhythm of the güiro and maraca accompaniments to "creole" music which gives a flavor absent from purely Spanish musical literature. To the resultant mixture must be added African percussion and the changes resulting from the repertoire and influence of each new immigrant group from Spain. The resultant merger is evident today in traditional Puerto Rican folklore and music.

With the introduction of slavery in the sixteenth century, the Island's music received a tranfusion of new rhythmic elements and it was the African immigrant who kept the indiginous music alive through economic setbacks, hurricanes and other historical and natural restraints to musical progress.

*Batey: A park in front of the home of the cacique. Today the people in the mountains call their front yards bateyes.

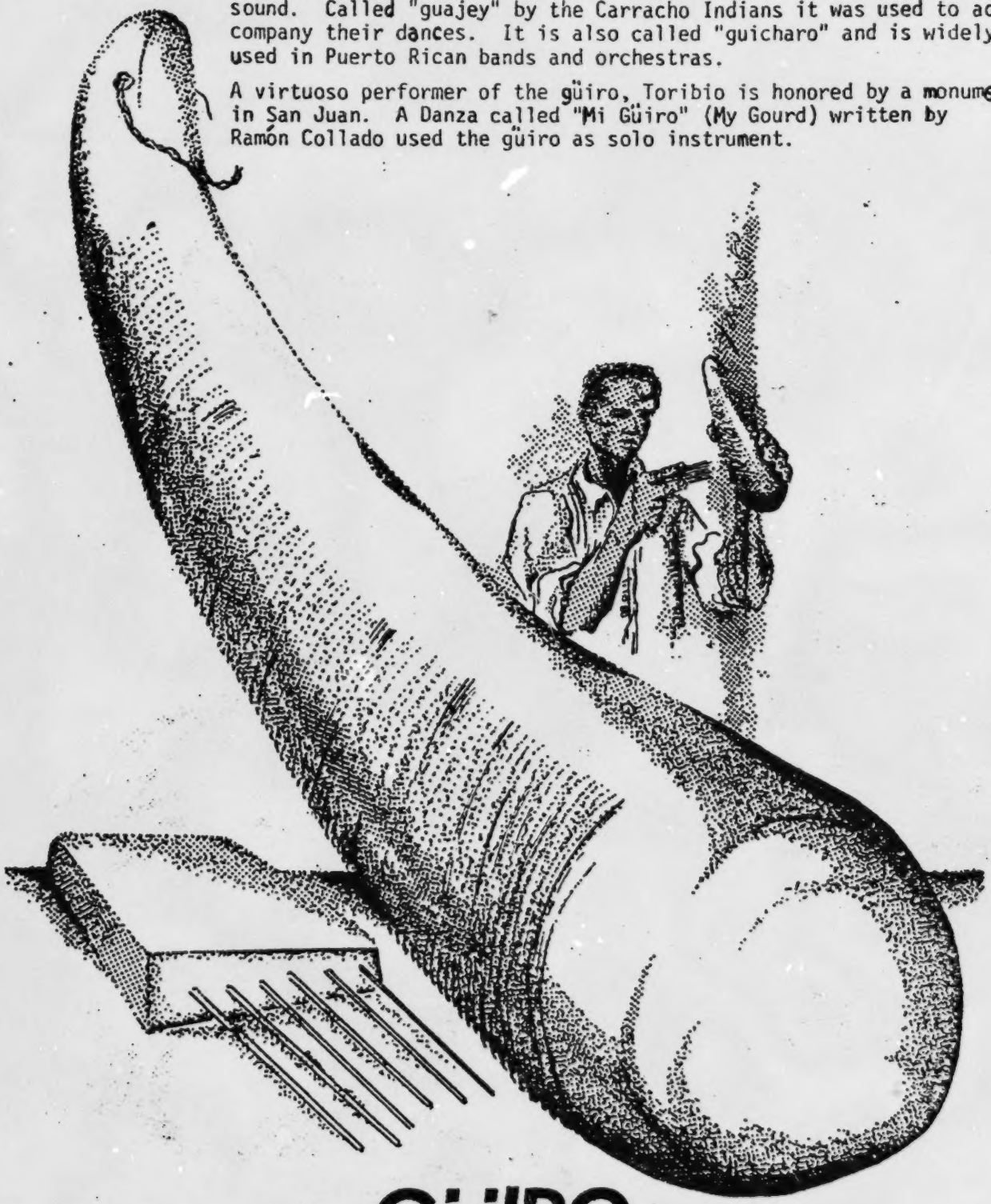
The dances as well as the music of Puerto Rico may be divided into four categories: (1) The music and dances of the coastal towns and sugar cane fields include the "Bomba" and the "Plena". (2) Those near the mountains exist in great variety including the popular "Seis Chorreao" in which the singer improvises "Con Décima" (tenth poems) within a structural pattern given by the accompaniment of the cuatro, guitar, and güiro. (3) Dances like the "Danza" are more frequent in the big cities such as Ponce, Mayaguez, Arecibo, and San Juan where in social clubs or "Casinos" orchestras were organized to perform at social events or "bailes de sociedad". (4) With increasing influence from American jazz and from other Carribean Islands, Afro-Cuban rhythms combined in New York City to create the final sounds "Salsa" (a commercial name originated by recording companies to sell a product under that name) which grouped Afro-Cuban, Puerto Rican and Carribean sounds. Recorded mostly by a new generation of Puerto Ricans born in New York City the Salsa became popular in Puerto Rico as soon as it was introduced to the Island. This music has the basis cultural ingredients of Taíno, African, Carribean and American influences.

POPULAR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN PUERTO RICO

1. Güiro
2. Maracas
3. Caracol
4. Drum or Maguey
5. Cuatro
6. Tiple, Bordonúa, Tres
7. Guitar
8. Bomba Drums
9. Congas
10. Clave
11. The Plena Drum
12. Timbales
13. Bongo Drums
14. Cencerro (Cow Bell)
15. Tambora

A Taíno Indian rhythm instrument made from the "marimbo" gourd. The fruit is hollowed by removing the pulp. Grooves are made on the outside over which a forked wire (pua) is rubbed to produce a rhythmic sound. Called "guajey" by the Carracho Indians it was used to accompany their dances. It is also called "guicharo" and is widely used in Puerto Rican bands and orchestras.

A virtuoso performer of the güiro, Toribio is honored by a monument in San Juan. A Danza called "Mi Güiro" (My Gourd) written by Ramón Collado used the güiro as solo instrument.



GÜIRO

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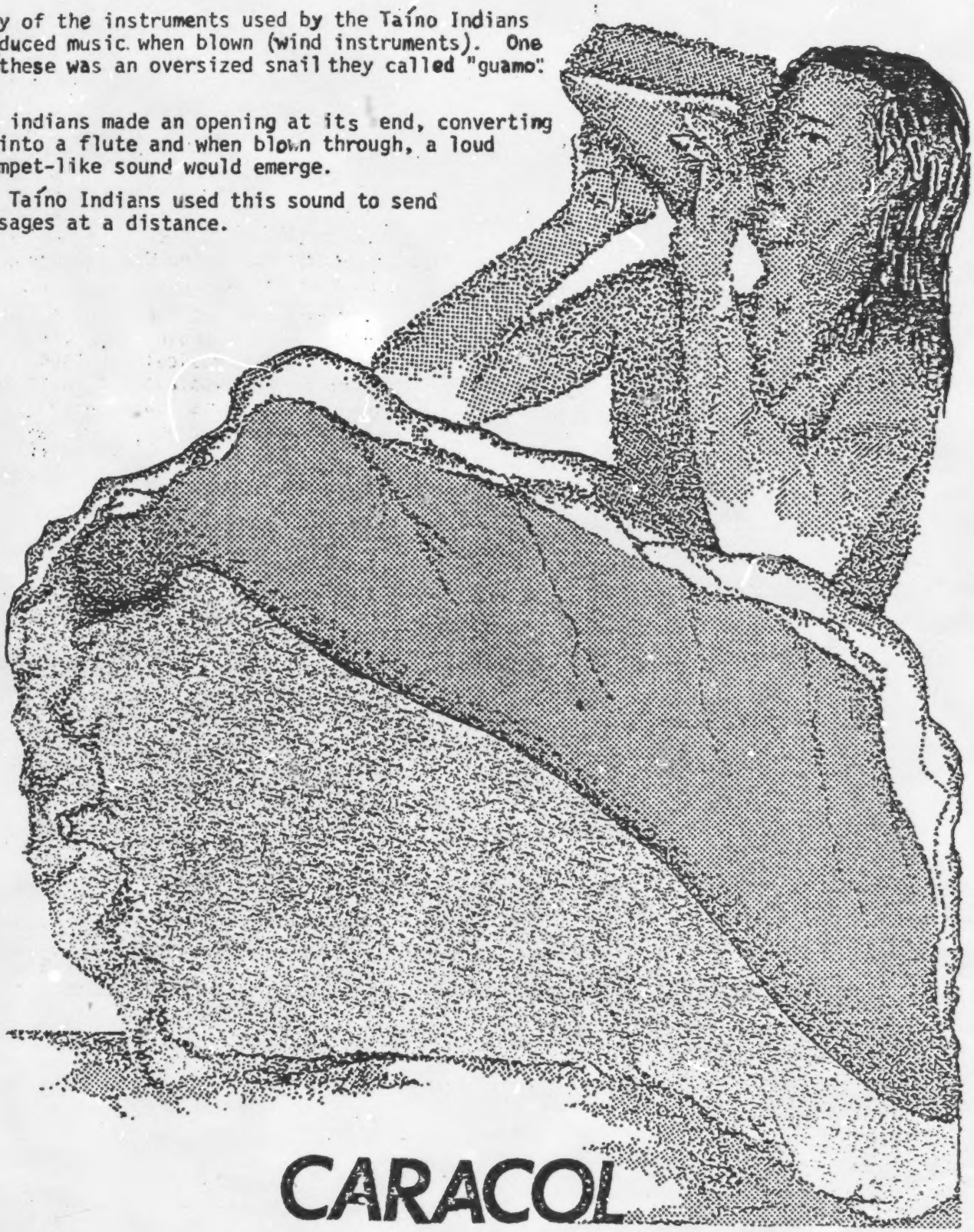
An original instrument common to the Taíno Indians, the maracas are made from the fruit of the "higüera". The pulp is removed from the smallest, roundest fruit by means of a small hole made at the base. Small pebbles or dried seeds inside serve to produce the characteristic swishing rhythmic sound when the instrument is shaken by a wooden handle inserted into the small hole made in the base. This instrument and the güiro were used by the indians as a dance accompaniment.

MARACAS

Many of the instruments used by the Taíno Indians produced music when blown (wind instruments). One of these was an oversized snail they called "guamo".

The indians made an opening at its end, converting it into a flute and when blown through, a loud trumpet-like sound would emerge.

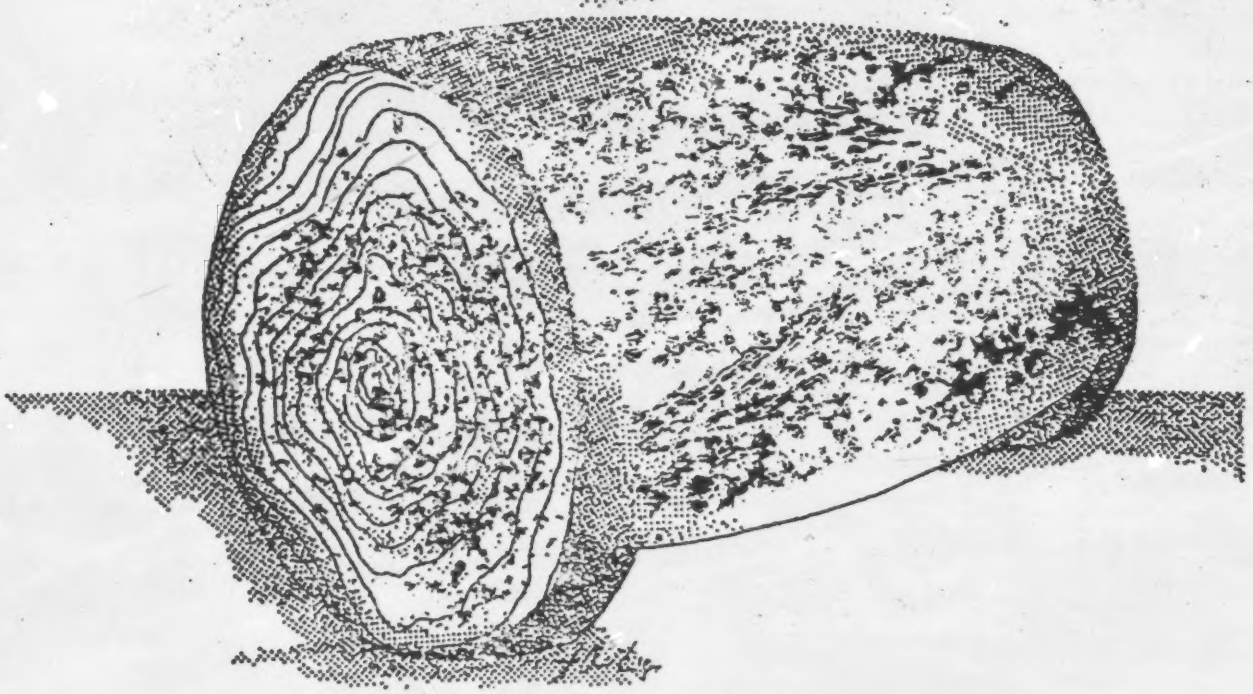
The Taíno Indians used this sound to send messages at a distance.



CARACOL

In the music of Puerto Rico, several kinds of drums were used, and still are being used presently. The Taíno Indians used the drum in the Areytos (or religious ceremonies). Historians describe the Taíno drums as hollow tree trunks.

The Africans brought their drums to the island and those drums became part of our musical heritage. The African drum was a barrel with a goat skin. It was beaten with the hands to produce sound.



Tambor o Maguey

A traditional Puerto Rican instrument originally made from a hollow "yagrumo blanco" tree glued together by a resin extracted from the "pinula" plant

The cuatro has five double strings tuned G, D, A, E and B.

The cuatro has been saved from oblivion by Francisco López Cruz who wrote a method for the instrument and popularized it by forming an orchestra for performance of Puerto Rican music.

The instrument is used as a solo voice usually accompanied by a guitar and güiro. There are three musical instruments related to the cuatro. They are the Tiple, Bordonua and Tres.

CUATRO

The Tiple: The Tiple is made in two different styles; one with a square box and the other is similar in shape to the guitar. They have five strings and sometimes the strings are double and called mandurrias. They are tuned in the same way the guitar is, but their sound is sharper.

The Tres: The Tres is a three stringed instrument from which it get's its name. Some people say it is similar to an old musical instrument called "jabas." Others say it is related to the latin guitar.

The Bordonúa: The Bordonúa is a typical instrument and is as popular as the other two. The name comes from a thick string called bordón, which produces a deep pitch. It has six strings and it is played with a plectro (plectrum). The Bordonúa is larger than the guitar.

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The Spanish guitar was first given that name in 1586, by the Catalonian Carlos Amat. There were several kinds of string instruments similar to our modern guitar. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the instrument had four double strings. From the beginning, the mountain people of Puerto Rico adopted the guitar as one of the most popular musical accompaniments in the Island.

GUITARRA

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This instrument was common among the African tribes. Bomba drums are two drums made of wooden barrels covered with goat skin. The larger drum is called the burlador and the smaller drum is called the subidor.

A small barrel without a bottom is used with a goatskin or cowskin stretched on the top and is beaten by hand for rhythmic accompaniment to the dance. The tradition of using Bomba drums for dancing is maintained in the town of Loiza by groups such as the Ayala family.

TAMBORES DE BOMBA

Conga drums originally were made with wooden barrels covered with goatskins. The quinto is the narrow drum and the tumbadora is the wider one. The congas came to us from the Afro-Cuban musical heritage. They may look similar to the bomba drum, but the sound is different.

CONGAS

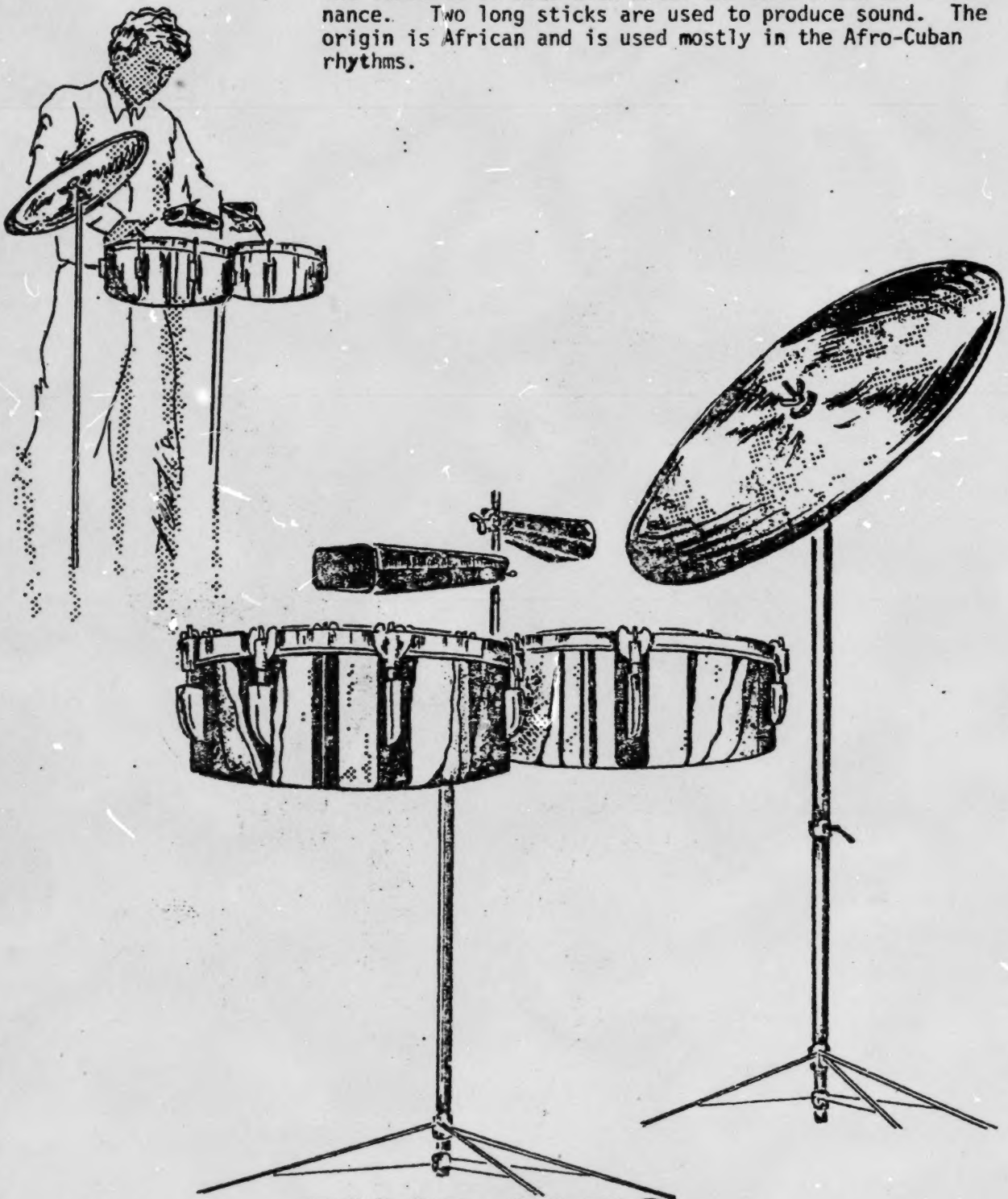
The clave origins are traced to the Banti Africans and are used in the Bomba dance and other Caribbean rhythms. The claves are also known as "Palillos". The sound is produced by beating one against the other.

CLAVE

The Pandereta is a hand drum that looks like a tambourine without the metallic disks. The large one is called the segunda and it establishes the basic pattern of rhythm. The smaller hand drum is called requinto and is used for melodious rhythms. It is both African and Spanish in origin and it is used mostly in the Plena.

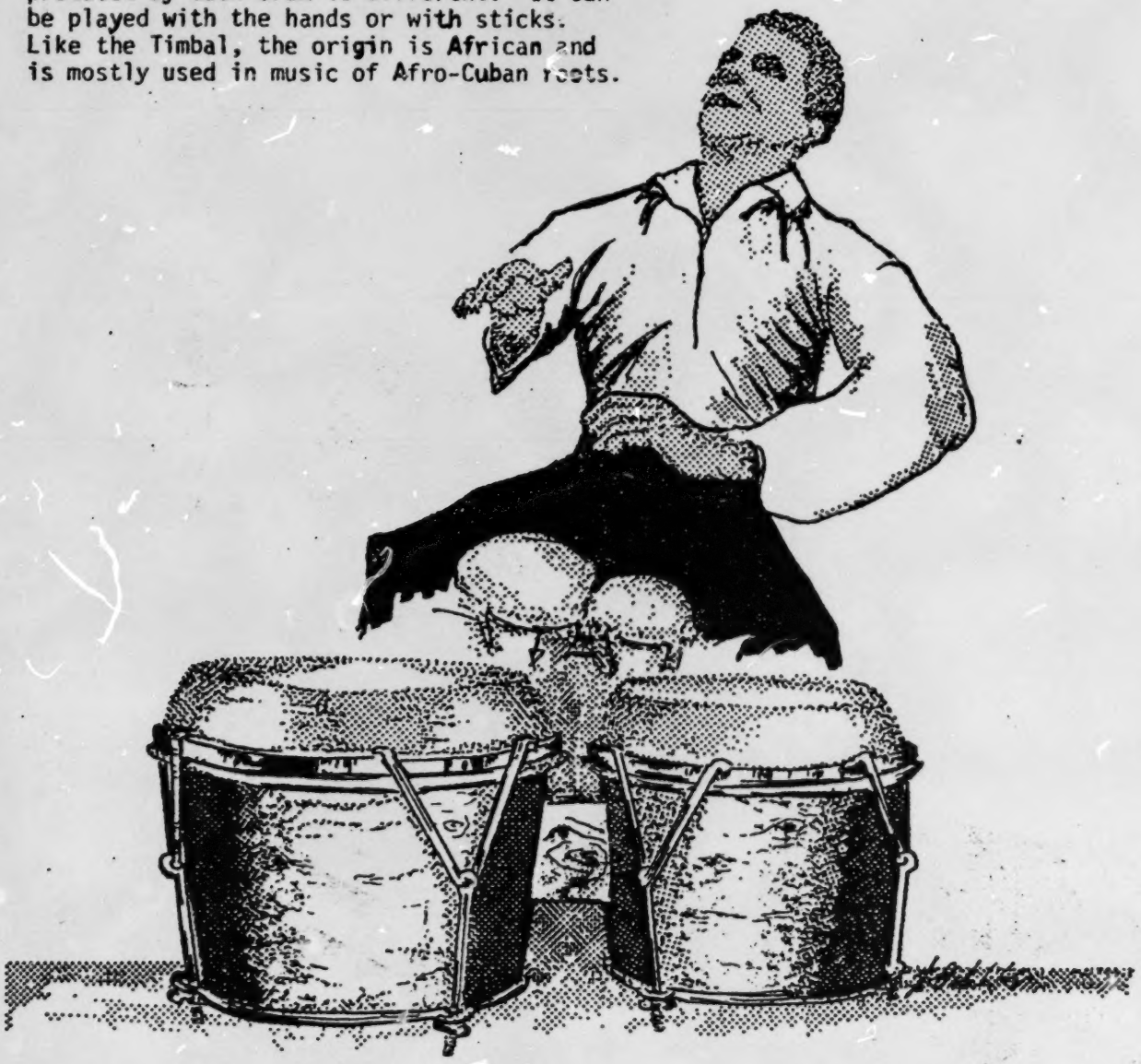
PANDERETA

The Timbales is made with metal and thin skins for resonance. Two long sticks are used to produce sound. The origin is African and is used mostly in the Afro-Cuban rhythms.



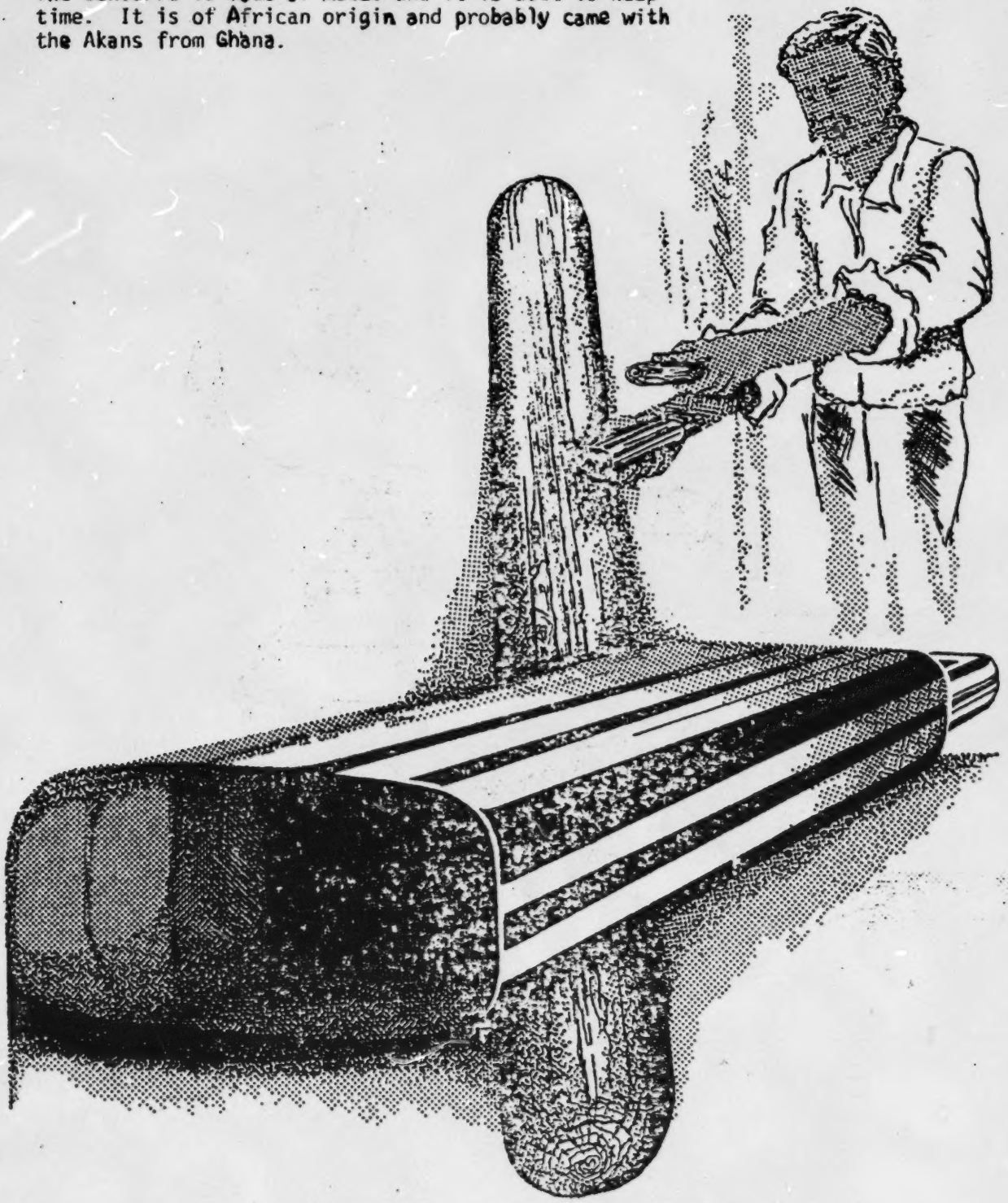
TIMBALES

The Bongo Drums are two small barrels made of wood; one larger than the other. The sound produced by each drum is different. It can be played with the hands or with sticks. Like the Timbal, the origin is African and is mostly used in music of Afro-Cuban roots.



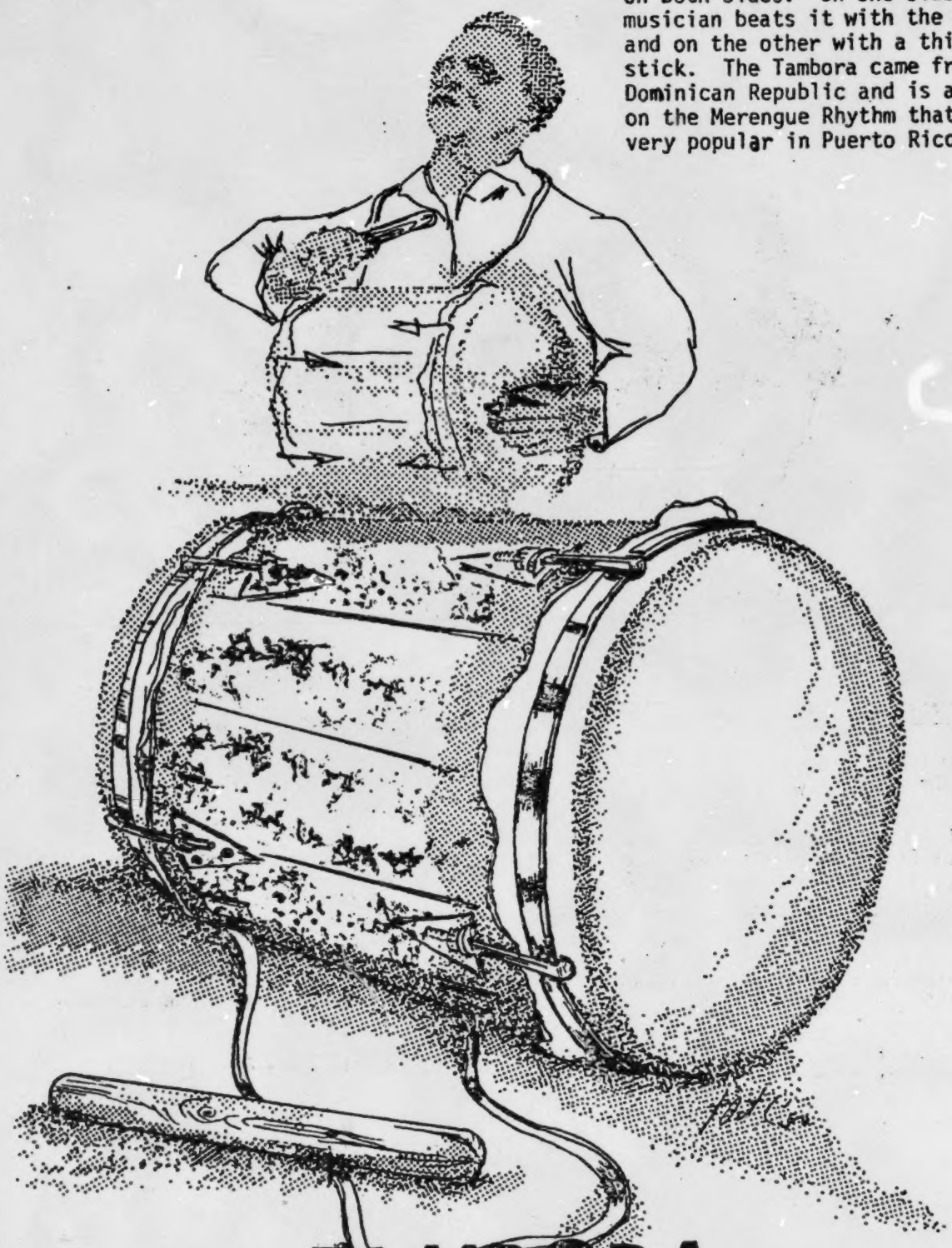
BONGÓ

The Cencerro is made of metal and it is used to keep time. It is of African origin and probably came with the Akans from Ghana.



CENCERRO

The Tambora is a drum smaller than the Congas and is held slightly under the arm or around the neck with a rope. The drum has skins on both sides. On one side, the musician beats it with the hand and on the other with a thin stick. The Tambora came from the Dominican Republic and is a must on the Merengue Rhythm that is very popular in Puerto Rico.



TAMBORA

Rafael Aponte Ledeé

RAFAEL APONTE LEDEÉ (1938-)

This young composer was born in Guayama on the 15th of October 1938. He studied with Eulalio Rodríguez.

In 1957 he received a fellowship from the Department of Instruction from the Government of Puerto Rico to study at the Real Conservatory of Madrid. There he studied under Professor Emilio López and Padre Masso, (harmony) Professor Francisco Cales and Cristóbal Halffler (composition). In 1964 he received the first prize in harmony at this Conservatory.

Later he received a fellowship to study under the famous Argentine composer, Alberto Ginasterra.

Aponte has composed piano music, art songs, orchestra themes and dialogues for flutes and violas.

Recently, he was commissioned by the Institute of the Puerto Rican Culture in order to restore the Misa en Do Mayor of Felipe Gutierrez Espinosa.

At present, Aponte is a music teacher at the Conservatory of Puerto Rico.

Fernando Callejo

FERNANDO CALLEJO FERRER (1862-1926)

Fernando Callejo was born in 1862. His musical illustration and composition dealt around two great interests expressing the evolution of the Puerto Rican music. At the end Callejo did not have any competition.

His work, "Música y Músicos Puertorriqueños," is considered an important work in our musical history. As a composer, he held his inspiration on the traditional work.

Callejo innovated the songs of art, theatrical comprehensions of his time and the Puerto Rican "danzas." He expressed his knowledge and work at various towns of the Island, such as: San Juan, Ponce, Utuado, and finally Manatí where he spent many years of his life.

Embittered by his political inconsequences and poverties he migrated to New York City where he died in 1926.

Braulio Dueño Colón

BRAULIO DUEÑO COLÓN (1854-1923)

Braulio Dueño Colón is one of the most outstanding musicians of Puerto Rico. He was born in San Juan in 1854, and moved to Bayamón at an early age where he spent the rest of his life. He was a composer, an instrumental player and a musician.

He left many of his outstanding works for symphony and religious numbers: Puerto Rican "danzas" and scholastic groups. He received the first prize in 1914 by the Ateneo Puertorriqueño for his contribution and consideration in developing and training young children of the country.

La Terruca was one of his scholastic works published in 1904. This is a happy march showing the greatness of the country. He died in 1923.

NOEL ESTRADA (1918-1979)

Born in Isabela, Puerto Rico on the 4th of June 1918, Noel Estrada is known by the people as the "Composer that Sings". He has composed and written music for more than 250 songs of various rhythms and different types.

His repertoire is composed of "boleros", "guarachas", "pasillos", "criollas", songs "jibaras", religious selections, "bulerias", "pasodobles", "zambas", hymns, "aguinaldos" and "villancicos".

He has dedicated many of his best songs to Puerto Rico where he became a popular composer. He became famous in Puerto Rico and outside the island for such works as: "El Amor del Jibarito", "En Mi Viejo San Juan", "Sinfonía Borincana", "Amor del alma", "Lo Nuestro Terminó", and "Campanas de Gloria." Noel Estrada died December, 1979.

JESÚS FIGUEROA (1878-1971)

Born in Aquadilla on the 17th of April, 1878, Jesús Figueroa began to study music at an early age and later became a band director and composer. He composed many operas and dances "zarzuelas". He was married to Doña Carmen Sanabria, a music professor. His children are well known musicians: Pepito and Kachiro are violinists; Narciso, Carmen, Leonor And Angélica are pianists; Guillermo, a violinist; and Rafaél, a cellist. The family is well known as the group "Quinteto Figueroa" in Puerto Rico, as well as throughout the world.

Don Jesús Figueroa was honored by a Gold Medal in 1960 by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture. He died on April 11, 1971.

Pedro Flores

PEDRO FLORES (1892 -)

Pedro Flores was born in Naguabo, Puerto Rico in 1892. He received his elementary education in Naguabo. His family moved to Fajardo and there he completed his tenth grade. He attended Rio Piedras Normal School and received a degree of a special teacher of English. He worked for five years as a teacher in Yabucoa and Humacao.

He served in World War I as an official of the 375th regiment of Santurce. After the First World War, Flores returned to Camacho College in San Juan to study business administration. He was employed as a sub-secretary of the Municipality of San Juan.

In 1926, Pedro Flores moved to New York and was employed in the post office. He dedicated his life to music after a bout with pneumonia that forced him to leave his employment. He was influenced in the art of music by composer Rafael Hernández.

Due to his natural talent, he began to write and compose music in 1928. His work includes such songs as "Toma Jabón Pa Que Lave", his first published song. Other songs are: "Adelita, Azucena, Despedida, Irresistible, Borracho No Vale, Amor Perdido, Vivir Separados" and many more.

Rafael Hernández

RAFAEL HERNÁNDEZ (1896-1965)

Born in Aquadilla on the 24th of October, 1896, Rafael Hernández studied music with the Maestro José Lequirica. He traveled to Europe, the United States and Mexico. While in New York, he composed "Lamento Borincano". Later he composed various works, such as "Capullito de Alelí", "El Jibarito", etc. He also became popular for his style, especially for his short classical music. The characteristic of the music of Rafael Hernández is not limited to one place or a region - it varies. His melodies consist of warm to lively acts that became attractive world wide.

Some of his compositions are: "Preciosa", "Domingo de San Garabito", "Los Carreteros". "El Buen Borincano", "Silencio", "Romance", "Ahora seremos Felices","El Cumbanchero", "Desmayo de Una Lágrima" and others. He died in San Juan on December 11, 1965.

Manuel Jiménez "Canario"

MANUEL JIMÉNEZ "CANARIO" (1895-1975)

Manuel Jiménez was born in Orocovis, Puerto Rico. He started singing for buttons at the tender age of four and became a recording artist at nineteen. His life was very adventurous since he was a stowaway at fourteen. He learned to read in jail, during the First World War when the ship he was working on failed to pay taxes to the government of Guatemala. His nickname, "Canario," means canary, and like the bird, he was always singing. He was a composer of romantic music and plenas. The plenas made him very famous as a recording artist. He always regreted that people ignored his romantic songs, yet loved all his plenas. Among his songs are: "Tintorera del Mar, Cuando las Mujeres, El Perro de San Jerónimo, Santa María, Tanta Vanidad, Bum-Bum, Elena," and many more.

Ladislao Martínez "Ladi"

LADISLAO MARTÍNEZ (Ladi)-(1898-)

Ladislao Martínez was born in Vega Alta in 1898. His parents were a typical mountain family who moved to the town to provide an education for their child. Very early in life Ladislao was taught by two famous cuatro teachers: Joaquín Gandía, "La Paloma," and Carlos Soriano. When he moved to San Juan he was already a very skilled cuatro player: a fact acknowledged by famous musicians of his time who asked him to join several musical groups. Ladislao 's speciality is the mazurka. Even today most cuatro players imitate his style. There is no cuatro player that will consider himself an expert without including in his repertoire the mazurca, "Aurora." Among his compositions are: "Ilusión, Luana, Aurora Mi Vacilón, Julita, Amor Soñado," and many others.

Angel Mislán

ANGEL MISLÁN (1862-1911)

Angel Mislán was born in San Sebastian del Pepino on March 1, 1862 and died in Barceloneta, February 1, 1911. He studied melodies with his father. His favorite instrument was a "Bombardino" (saxhorn). As an instrumentalist, he was very powerful. His danza "Tu y Yo", is similar in composition to the writings of Gustavo Adolfo Becquer.* Other compositions are "Pobre Boricua", "Recuerdos y Lágrimas" and "Ojos de Cielo".

*Gustavo Adolfo Becquer - romantic poet of Spain.

Juan Morel Campos

JUAN MOREL CAMPOS (1857-1896)

Born in Ponce on the 16th of May 1857, Juan Morel Campos died in the same city on April 26, 1896. He became popular for his writing of religious, romantic, theatrical, danzas and mourning music. He became an Orchestra Director, founded the "Sociedad de Conciertos - La Lira Ponceña", they auditioned in various towns and also traveled to South America with various opera companies. He has composed more than two hundred "danzas puertorriqueñas" that made him very famous. In 1957 the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture published various volumes of his "danzas" and other work that he composed.

Sylvia Rexach

SYLVIA REXACH (1921-1961)

Sylvia Rexach was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico. She started law school and then decided to join the army. After leaving the army, she married William Riley. They separated and she went back to Puerto Rico. She started acting in the theater and writing scripts and interpreting comedy roles on the radio. She even formed a ladies group that specialized in comedy and traveled throughout the island. Sylvia started composing music without ever taking music lessons. Her poems became musical gems because they represented the vulnerability of women in love. Some of her best songs are: "Olas y Arenas, Nave Sin Rumbo, and Alma Adentro."

FELIPE ROSARIO GOYCO "DON FELO" (1898 - 1954)

Felipe Rosario Goyco was born in San Juan and became famous as a guitarist. His compositions are considered very challenging by expert players. The originality and richness of his music is incredible because he only had four years of formal education. Among his songs are: "Mi Dolor es Mio (bolero), Mi Guitarra (waltz),Raquel (danza), Recuerdo a Luis (danza), and Rosa (waltz)."

MYRTA SYLVA (1927-)

Myrta Sylva started as a singer when she was twelve years old and became very famous throughout Latin American countries. R.C.A. Victor gave her recognition as their top selling singing star for the years 1947 to 1949. In 1940, she started composing her own songs. Her first song was "Chencha la Gamba," which became a big hit. Many famous singers began recording her compositions. In 1956, she became a television star with her own program. From 1966 to 1970, she moved to New York and worked for Channel 47. In 1971, she went back to Puerto Rico and now she presents special programs for television and records. Some of her songs are: "Cuando Vuelvas, Que Sabes Tu, Fin de Amor, En Mi Soledad," and many more.

Dance consultants for the Ethnic/Arts Project in this booklet are Ms. Judith Moa and Mr. José Palermo.

Mr Palermo's steps are for older students and to be used with a group. Ms. Moa's are basic steps which younger children can follow with ease.

Ms. Moa, former director of the Retablo Group which worked in the motion picture "Puerto Rico Atraves De Sus Bailes Folklóricos", presently teaches in the Willimantic Public Schools.

Mr. Palermo, a professional dance instructor who organized teacher and student dance groups in Connecticut, presently teaches in the Waterbury Public Schools.

MUSICAL FORMS

By José Palermo

Danza

This is a musical composition that reveals the romantic, passionate and sentimental character of the Puerto Ricans. It emerged in the 19th Century.

The first known composers of Danzas are Aurelio Dueño and Francisco Santaella. Thereafter, two of the most famous danza composers in the history of Puerto Rican Musical expression are Manuel G. Tavarez and Juan Morell Campos, whose countless danzas were written to be played by a full orchestra. In the 20th Century the most prominent composers of danzas are Simón Madera, Angel Mislán, Rafael Alers, Juan F. Acosta, as well as many others.

During the past few years, a great interest in classical music has flourished in the island. The world famous Pablo Casals annual festival in Puerto Rico, attracted to the island, the most famous contemporary musicians of the world.

A patriotic Danza, La Borinqueña, is the national anthem of Puerto Rico.

La Danza

The Danza is composed of two parts, the first part is call the paseo and the second is the merengue.

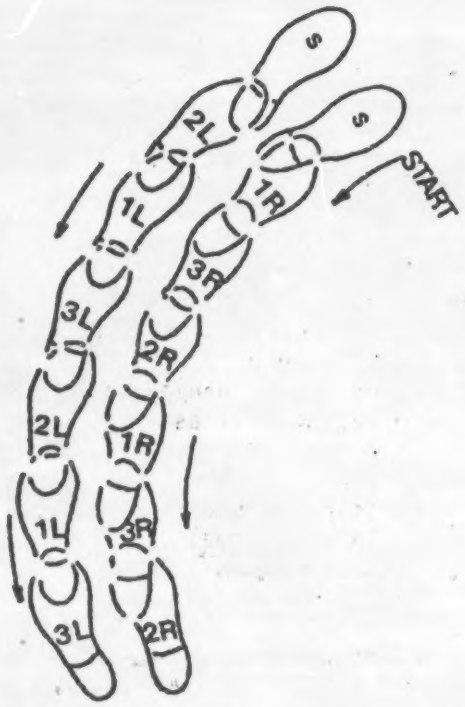
El Paseo (The Stroll)

To start the stroll the man stands to the left of the woman. He extends his arm bent at the elbow. She will place her left hand over his right hand and they will start walking counterclockwise to complete a circle. They continue to walk until they hear a change in the music. While walking, the woman will be fanning herself using a fan held in the right hand.

When the music changes, the couples stand facing each other to start dancing the merengue. There are two positions for standing and they depend on the kind of clothes worn by the woman.

First Position:

The man places his right hand on the woman's waist and extends his left arm out. The woman extends her left arm holding a small cord that is tied to the train of her dress. Then she extends her right arm while holding her fan in a closed position and then she holds her partner's hand.



Second Position:

The man places his right hand on the woman's waist and extends his left arm out.

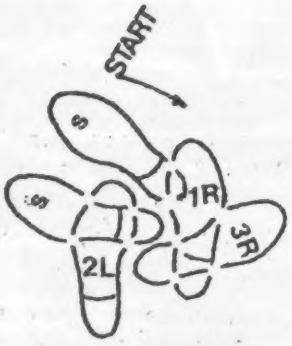
The woman places her left hand on her partner's right shoulder and holds his left hand with her right hand, while holding her closed fan in her right hand.

Using one of these positions and holding their bodies very straight, they merengue.

El Merengue:

The man starts with his right foot back followed by his left, either dragging his feet on the floor (or raising them so lightly you can hardly tell). Now you count 1,2,3 or right foot, left foot and continue in a large circle.

After doing this, the couple starts to turn in a small circle counterclockwise. The man moves his left foot left and then his right foot is placed in a perpendicular position to the left foot and you count 1,2,3 or 1,r,1,r,1,r, until a full turn is completed. The woman does the same steps in reverse.

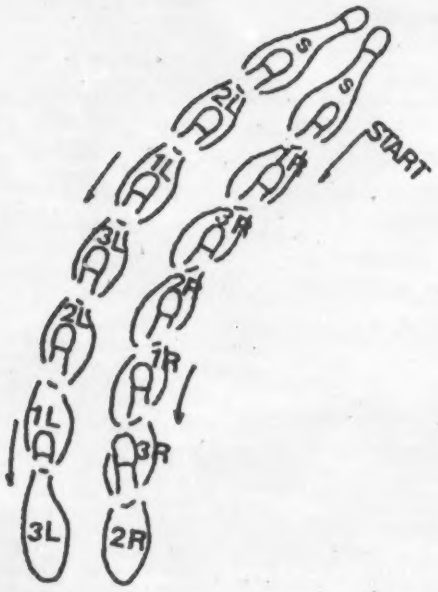


When the turn is completed, the man starts with his left foot dragging followed by his right and moving forward to the beat of the music 1,r,1,r,1,r,1,r,1. When the melody increases the beat, the couple will turn one or two times always moving in a circle. All dancing couples will move in a circle.

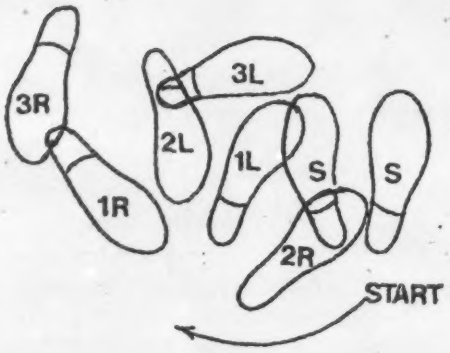
DANCE STEPS FOR LA DANZA

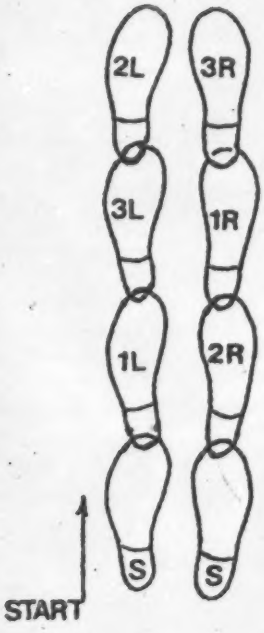
(MAN)

42



DANCE STEPS FOR LA DANZA
(WOMAN)





"La Danza" is part of what is known as "society dances", introduced in Puerto Rico via Spain.

In the island, this particular dance is known as a type of square dance. In the beginning, a series of changes were made and the square dance was converted to an elegant dance affair called "contradanza".

A distinction is to be made between two type of danzas; the "Danza Capitalina" and the "Danza Ponceña". The "Danza Ponceña" is quite vertiginous, while the "Danza Capitalina" has a more peaceful pace with less rotation.

Description:

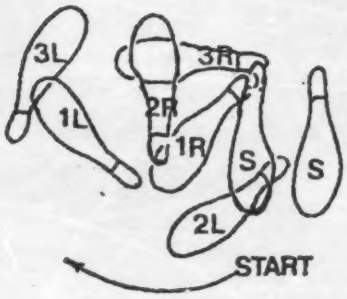
1. "La Danza" is divided into two parts: the paseo and the merengue.
2. The Paseo: the couples start by holding each others arms. The male dancer gives his right arm to the female dancer who uses her left arm to interlock. (The female dancer holds a fan in the right hand).
3. The Paseo is one which is considered very elegant. It is done around the dance floor, before the actual dancing begins. The Paseo is done during the first 16 compasses.
4. The basic step can be described as step-close-step with a musical timing of four by four.

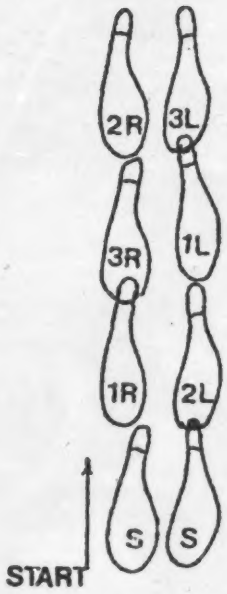
DANCE STEPS FOR LA DANZA

(MAN)

by

Judith Moa





DANCE STEPS FOR LA DANZA
(WOMAN)

by
Judith Moa

LA BOMBA

Literally speaking, "La Bomba" means "The Bomb". The Bomba dance contains movements and chants. It is of African origin.

The Bomba dances are characteristic of the towns around the coast near the sugar cane fields. It was a way of entertainment for the black Puerto Rican people during the weekend and for occasions like the end of the sugar cane harvest.

The dance took place outdoors with the drums, "Bomba Drums", warming up with dancers, singers or just watchers who gather around the musicians. Among the spectators were the children who hoped to be future "Bomba" dancers. The children would welcome the musicians and practice their dancing while the musicians rehearsed their music.

Usually the Bomba is started with a female voice singing the melody or chant followed by a chorus response in unison.

Dancers dance by themselves, not in couples, and move to the rhythm of the drums in a kind of dialogue or conversation between one of the drum (requinto) players and the dancer. It is a rhythmical conversation, the dancer moving the body with the beat of the drum. One drum (burleador) keeps a steady beat while the other improvises. It is free style improvisatory dancing.

The musical instruments used are: A Bomba Drum of low pitch and another with high pitch (requinto). The lower one is like a bass drum (burleador); the smaller one improvises (a capricho). The small drum establishes a challenge between the dancer and the drummer.

Two "sticks" called "cuas or fua" are used for the accompaniment played against one of the sides of the drum (burleador). One shaker (maraca) is usually played by a female who sings in the chorus (chants).

Rhythm and melody are the most important. Harmony is not very important since most of the chorus singing is in unison. The meter is 2/4 and 6/8 fast tempo.

La Bomba

When the music starts the couples come out dancing, forming two lines (males on one line and females on the other line) and they keep moving at the beat of the music.

Moving fast they start with the right foot and they go r.l.r., r.l.r. until they reach the chosen place on the dance floor.

Sometimes the couples come from different sides and make two lines until the partners are facing each other at a distance of several feet.

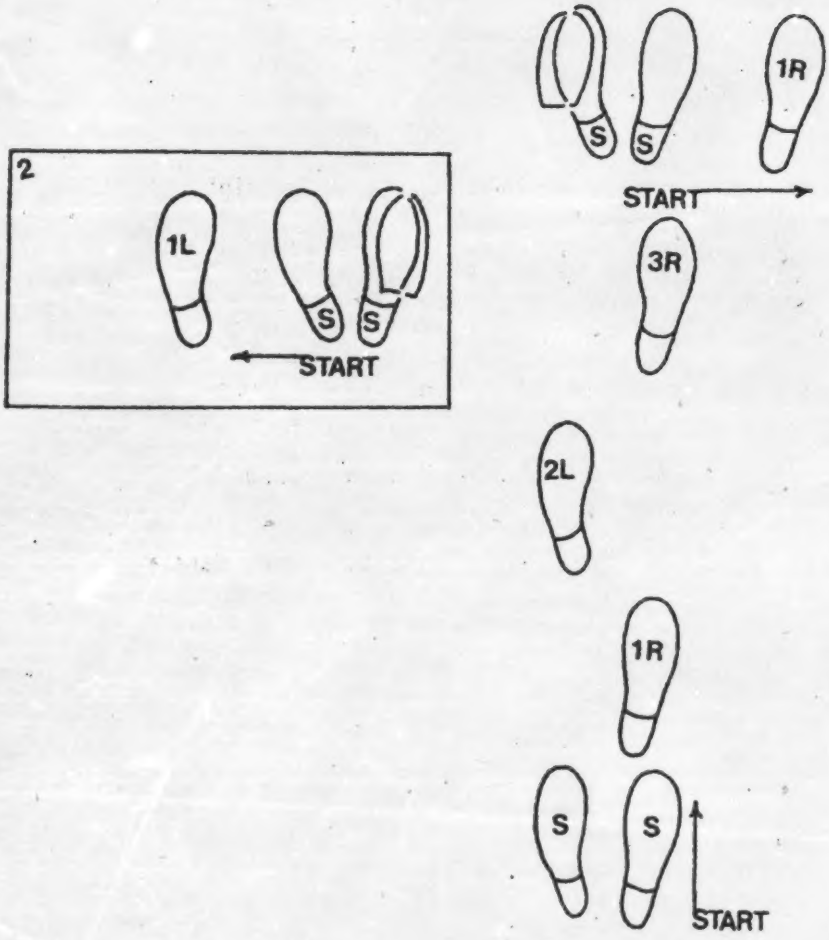
All the dancers start doing the basic step at the same beat facing the same side.

Initial Position

The man starts with both feet together and he raises his right foot with his leg bent lightly at the knee and moves it to the right at a distance of a foot from the original position. While making this movement he raises the heel of the left foot shifting his weight and then returning his right foot to the original position and lowering his left heel. Then he repeats the step with his left foot.

While the couples are doing the basic steps one of the dancers moves to the center to do a different step or movement (free dance). He may challenge the drummers to a duel to play harder and faster by going closer to the drummers and moving or jumping or moving his shoulders very fast while spinning.

The dance will end when all dancers have taken a turn free dancing of the drummers quit playing.



DANCE STEPS FOR LA BOMBA

by
José Palermo

PLENA

The Plena is a Puerto Rican folkloric dance of the coastal areas of Puerto Rico as well as the slums of the big cities. Like other music forms of South America and the Caribbean Islands, such as: the Dominican "Merengue", the Columbian "Porro", Trinidad "Calypso", Mexican "Corrido", English "Ballad", etc., it's characteristics are simple and repetitive.

The themes are varied and differ reflecting the city, philosophy religion, and even superstition. Sometimes, the Plena is news in music, since any disaster or slum incident is set to music.

There are different theories about the origin of this musical form. But it is known that the form was already set around the year 1920.

The words from an early Plena state:

"La Plena que yo conozco
no es de la China ni del Japón
porque la Plena viene de Ponce
y es del "Barrio" de San Antón."

"The Plena that I know
is not from China nor Japan
because the Plena comes from Ponce
from the "Barrio" of San Antón."

Of the musical instruments used, the most obvious is the pandero, a tamborine with a metal ring without shakers. Others were added later including the hand sinfonía (accordion), the guitar, the cuatro, the güiro, the maracas, trumpet, clarinet, etc.

The singing part of the Plena is based on a soloist and a chorus alternated in unison or harmonizing in thirds or sixths. Sometimes the second voice makes harmony in an octave higher, called "requinto".

There is solo improvisation on the melody - the chorus repeats in response.

The Plena is in 2/4 time. The rhythm is fast and happy, with characteristic diversity of triplets and syncopation in each measure.

Example of Plenas:

1. Obispo de Ponce
2. Santa Maria
3. Que Bonita Es
4. Que Bonita Bandera
5. Tintorera del Mar

Like the Décima, the Plena is often composed to record important events. The lively rhythm is African and the melodious tune is Spanish.

The Plena usually contains a short introduction which presents the theme to be sung by a solo voice which is then repeated by a chorus of mixed voices in unison.

The instruments used to perform are the pandero (hand drum), guitar, the sinfonía and the güiro. Other instruments such as the trumpet and the clarinet were used later.

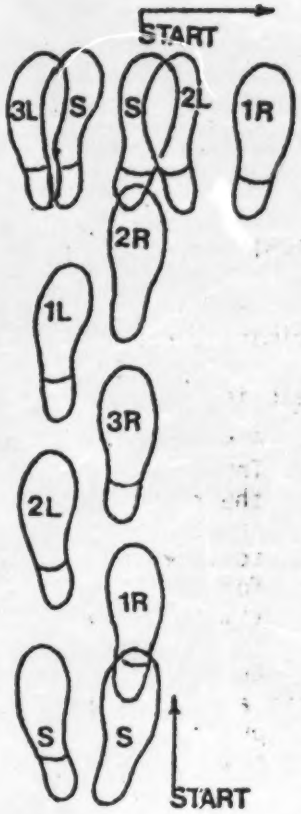
Manuel Jiménez, (Canario) made this music very popular in Puerto Rico as well as the United States.

César Concepción, a Puertorican, took the Plena to the dancing hall and introduced to "Society" a more sophisticated Plena with a big band sound.

The couples come marching towards the front doing the basic Plena steps. They can count 1,2,1,2 or r,l,r,l.* The couples can either stay in two lines or go to different spots around the dance area.

The couples face each other. The man places his right hand on the partner's waist and extends his left arm out. The woman places her left hand on the partner's right shoulder and she extends her right arm out and they hold hands.

Then they do the basic steps of La Plena sideways. The man starts with both feet together and he moves his right foot to the right (in a dragging motion), he moves his left foot and places it next to the right foot. Then he moves his left foot to the left followed by the right foot with a dragging motion.



These basic steps are done throughout the dance and they can be done forward, backwards and sideways. They can either turn around together or the man may turn his partner alone or he may spin her around while keeping the beat with the basic steps.

The choreography of the Plena can be done according to the theme of each particular song. Examples: "Tintorera del Mar" is about a female shark. You can have a fishing village, fish, sea waves with blue cloth and the fishermen. "Cortaron a Elena" is about the life in an inner city slum with fights, shouts, sadness and happiness. "Santa Maria" can start with a procession presenting the Virgin Mary when she cast out a demon or vegigante.

r,l,r,l, ...right, left, right, left.

DANCE STEPS FOR LA PLENA

by
José Palermo

"La Plena" is a modality of the Puerto Rican folkloric music. This musical composition along with the corresponding dance steps, is identified with the slums and coastal zones.

The essential characteristic in this form of dance is its simplicity and repetition.

Ponce is the city where, during the 1920's, the "plena" was primarily started and made popular.

Description

1. A simple dance with close and half open moving figures.
2. The dance's basic step may be described as: both feet at center, the right foot is lifted to the side and placed into previous position (this is done horizontally). The left foot is moved to the side and back to the center. This movement of the feet forward, to the sides and back to the center, takes a musical timing of two by four.

An addition has been made to the basic steps of the plena. This additional part is called "piquete". The step is done in the following manner: the heel is placed toward the center in a halting movement.

DANCE STEPS FOR LA PLENA

By Judith Moa

"El Seis" constitutes the backbone of the Puerto Rican music. It is in no doubt, the most popular of all the musical compositions of our "peasants",(as stated by the Puerto Rican folklorist, Dr. Fransisco Lopez Cruz.)

"El Seis" belongs to a group of country side dances (rural). It possesses an exact and pure style that is by no means careless, unpolished or distracted.

Description:

1. The steps are short and moderate.
2. The male dancer starts with the left foot while the female starts with the right one.
3. The female dancer starts with the right foot and once together, it seems as if both dancers started with the same foot.
4. The steps are done by using the feet and knees without movement of the hips or shoulders.
5. The basic step can be described as step-close-step which is a rapid musical timing with a measure of two by four.

DANCE STEPS FOR EL SEIS

By Judith Moa

DECIMA

The Decima is a ten line stanza in octosyllabic rhyme and a descendent of the Spanish "Espinela". It has become the most genuine form of Puerto Rican musical folklore. It is a folk-poetry basically Spanish, but with Puerto Rican variations. The Puerto Rican "jibaros" developed the decima using Spanish poetical forms, but adding improvisation. The decima was composed around any social or political happening in the life of the people. Its purpose was to keep events alive. Decimas are sung in special musical competitions where a number of rival groups (cantores-singers) take part during the celebration of the Fiestas Patronales (Patron's Saint Day).

The poet, Luis Torres (1866-1944), one of Puerto Rico's leading poets, wrote some of the best known decimas.

DECIMA DE LUIS LLORENS TORRES

Ya está el lucero del alba
encimita del palmar,
como horguilla de cristal
en el moño de una palma
hacia el vuela mi alma
buscandote en el vacio;
si también de tu bohío
lo estuvieras contemplando
ahora se estarían besando
tu pensamiento y el mío.

"The morning star shines
over the palm trees,
like a glass pin
over the crown of the palm.
Towards you my soul will fly
searching for you in the open space.
If you are looking from the bohío
you will see it too,
because your thoughts and mine
will meet and kiss.

AGUINALDOS

The aguinaldos are the Puerto Rican Christmas carols and they are not for dancing. In the spirit of the holiday, which extends from just before Christmas through Three Kings Day (January 6), groups of friends gather together and travel in "parrandas" and usually include a "conjunto" (group of musicians). Among the musical instruments, one will find several guitars, the native "cuatro" (a stringed instrument similar to a guitar), "güiros" (hollow gourds with ridges cut in them and scraped with a fork), "maracas" (gourds filled with tiny pebbles and shaken), and the "clave" or "palillos" (two smooth sticks struck together to emphasize a rhythmic beat.)

The original meaning of aguinaldo as a "gift" or "treat" is amply fulfilled as the singers and players are treated to Puerto Rican favorite foods. After the parranda has sampled good cheer at many neighbor's homes, the members make a final stop, with all participating in general singing and dancing.

SI ME DAN PASTELES

Si me dan pasteles	Have you some pasteles,
denmelos calientes,	Are they now a -baking?
que pasteles frios	Let us eat some pudding
empachan la gente	That the cook is making
Si me dan pasteles	Have you cuchifritos,
no me den cuchara	Are they nice and hot?
que mamá me dijo	Give us some to treat us
que se los llevara	We can eat a lot!

La Borinqueña

M. Fernández Juncos — Felix Astol

La tie - rra de Bo - rin - quen don -
de he na - ci - do yo,
Es un jar - dín flo - ri - do
de má - gi - co pri - mor. Un cie - lo siem - pre
ní - ti - do, le sir - ve de do - sel
Y dan a - rru - llos plá - ci - dos las o - las a sus
pies. Cuan-do a sus play - as lle - gó Co - lón, Ex - cla - mó
lle - no de ad - mi - ra - ción, Ex - cla - mó

He - no de ad-mi - ra - ción: ¡Oh! ¡Oh! ¡Oh!
Es — ta es la lin - da tie - rra — que bus - co
yo; — Es — Bo - rín - quen, la
hi - ja, la hi - ja del mar y el sol, —
Del mar y el sol, del mar y el sol,
Del mar y el sol, del mar y el sol.

Arroz con leche

Rice with Milk

Puerto Rico

Allegretto
1. A - rroz con le - che se quie - re ca - sar
2. Ya soy la viu - di - ta, la hi ja del Rey,
All: 1. Cold rice for sup - per with sug - ar and milk,
Girl: 2. I am a maid-en, the child of a king,
con u - na viu - dí - ta de la ca - pi - tal
me quie - ro ca - sar y no en - cuen-tro con - quien.
I'll mar - ry a maid - en with dress-es of silk;
I want a fine hus-band and gold wed-ding ring;
que se - pa re - jer, que se - pa, bor - dar,
Con - ti - go si, con - ti - go no,
She knows how to mend, she knows how to sew,
With you, sir, yes! With you, sir, no!
que pon - ga la a - gu - ja en su cam - pa - ni - Hol.
con - ti - go mi vi - da me ca - sa - ré yo.
She learned to knit sto k-ings a long time a - go.
With you to the al - tar I glad - ly will go.
Ti - lín, ti - lán, so - pi - tas de pan,
A long, a long, a long time a - go.
A - llá vie - ne Juan co - mién-do-se el pan.
A long time a - go, a long time a - go.

Best copy available

Tintorera del Mar

Plena

Tintorera del mar,
Tintorera del mar;
tintorera del mar
que se comió al americano
de la Guánica Central.

Letra y música compiladas por Francisco López Cruz © 1967 The Troutman Press

¡Qué Bonita!

Plena

Verso
¡ Qué bo_ni _ta es ! ¡ Qué bo_ni _ta
es ! ¡ Qué bo_ni _ta es la mu_jer que
Coro
vie_ne de Bo_rin _quen ! ¡ Qué bo_ni _ta es !
¡ Qué bo_ni _ta es ! ¡ Qué bo_ni _ta
es la mu_jer que vie_ne de Bo_rin _quen.

¡Qué bonita es!
¡Qué bonita es!
¡Qué bonita es la mujer
que viene de Borinquen!

Letra y música compiladas por Francisco López Cruz © 1967 The Trentman Press

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Venid, Pastores

(Villancico)

Coro
Ve_nid, pas_to_res, ve_nid ¡Oh!, ve_nid a Be_lén. ¡Oh! ve_nid al por_
tal _____. Yo no me voy de Be_lén sin al Ni_ño Je_sús un mo_
Solo
men_to a_do_rar_____. Fin. Y la es_tre_lla de Be_lén_____ nos guia_
rá _____ con su luz _____ hasta el hu_mil de por_
tal _____ don_de na _____ ció Je_sús _____.

CORO: Venid, pastores, venid,
¡Oh, venid a Belén!
¡Oh, venid al portal!
Yo no me voy de Belén
sin al niño Jesús
un momento adorar.

1)

CORO: Y la estrella de Belén
nos guiará con su luz
hasta el humilde portal
donde nació Jesús.

2)

CORO: De la montaña el pastor
de prisa a Belén va,
para adorar a Jesús
que nació en el portal.

3)

CORO: ¿No oyes el gallo cantar?
Con su potente voz
anuncia al mundo que ya
Jesucristo nació.

Letra y música compiladas por Francisco López Cruz © 1967 The Troutman Press

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Pastores y Zagalas

Pas — to — res — y za — ga — las — ve —
nid, ve — nid, lle — gad — y al Ni — ño — que na —
cl — do — tes — tí — vos aob — se — quiar — ¡Ay, qué
lin — do — y que be — llo — ! ¡Qué gra — cio — so el Ni — ño es — tá —
— ! Suso — ji — tos — ya seen — tar — nan — ¡Ay! sí, sí, yo le
quie — roa — do — rar ¡Ay! sí, sí, yo le quie — roa — do — rar —

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RESOURCES

La Música Folklorica de Puerto Rico, Francisco Lopez Cruz
Mrs. Abel Plenn, Troutman Press, West Woods, Sharon, Connecticut 06609.

Biografías de Compositores Puertorriqueños
Materiales del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña.

Music of Puerto Rico, María Luisa Muñoz
American Book Co., 135 West 50th Street, New York, N.Y., 10020.

Abbad y Lasierra Inigo - História Geográfica Cívil y Natural de Puerto Rico - Editorial Universitaria, 1970, Page 28.

La Gran Enciclopedia de Puerto Rico, Vol.7, Page 6, Paragraph 4.

A booklet listing the resources available at The Ethnic/Arts Center of the Connecticut Migratory Children's Program, located at The Hamden-New Haven Cooperative Education Center, is available upon request.